

## THE SPOOKS OF SAWBUCK PLACE

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Written in 1989

It was in the year of 1963. My brother-in-law and I were contracting together. We did remodeling, repairs and most all kinds of carpenter work. One day we got a call from up near Pawhuska, about five miles from town out in the country. He man was going to have a lot of work done to his home and wanted us to give him a bid. He gave us directions as to how to get there. He was there to meet us at a big two story red brick house. The old house was pretty much run down and in need of much repair. The house was in Osage County and had been built by an Osage Indian back in the days of the great oil boom in that part of the country. The old house must have been 35 to 40 years old. Some of those Osage Indians became quite wealthy as they inherited the head rights from their relatives when they were deceased. The young fellow that owned the old house, Jim Sawbuck, was around 28 or 30 years old and was 3/4 blood Osage Indian. We went all through the house. It was completely empty, not even a chair. The walls and ceiling originally were plaster, but all the old plaster had been knocked off. It was ready to be sheet rocked. We looked the old house over inside and out. We called Jim Sawbuck the next day or so and gave him our bid. One week later Jim called us and told us we got the job. He wanted us to get started on it right away if we could. My brother-in-law hired a fellow he knew, Prest, to work for us. Two days later we went to Pawhuska and started to work on the old house. I had a new pickup truck so we traveled in it. Prest rode with me. We started working upstairs sheet rocking the ceilings and walls. Around 2 o'clock in the afternoon the phone rang. It was Prest's boy. Seems his son's car had broken down somewhere along the road about 40 miles away. Prest asked me if he could take my pickup to go help his son get his car going. I said, "I suppose so. But, you better be back here by 5 o'clock." I really didn't know Prest. I had only met him that morning. Prest left and I went back to work. At 5 o'clock, Prest had not gotten back with my pickup. I worked upstairs till dark. There weren't any lights upstairs, so I came downstairs to the kitchen which had the only light in the house, lit by a dim 25 watt bulb. I started mudding and taping the kitchen walls. They had already been sheet rocked but not mudded and taped. Things were very quiet as I worked. It had been dark around one hour when I heard the door slam upstairs. After a little while, the door slammed again. I thought Prest must have opened a window earlier and the wind was causing the door to slam. I went upstairs and felt all of the windows in the dark and found they were all closed. I walked back downstairs and started working again. I really never thought much about it that time. In just a short while the door slammed again upstairs. I was beginning to think things were a little strange. There wasn't even any wind blowing. While I was thinking about what I had heard, there was the sound of something sliding across the floor like a chair or a table. I went back upstairs and closed the doors. There were three, two closet doors and one door between the two big bedrooms. I went back downstairs

to work. I then heard the old stairs begin to squeak like some one was walking on them. But I was working within a few feet of them and there was no one there but me. By now I had been in the house for around ten hours. I realized there was something wrong in this old house. I knew the old stairs squeaked because I had gone up and down them many times all day. But yet, here they were squeaking without any reason. Again I heard something sliding on the floor upstairs - then a door slam. I thought, "What kind of deal is this?" Another door slam, another sliding sound across the floor from one end of the room to another. By this time, I had decided this old house was haunted. I had never been around anything like this before and didn't quite know how to handle the situation. I wasn't afraid or scared but I found it hard to believe I was hearing all those noises. I never heard any voices or saw any ghostly figures walking around, but the never ending sounds went on and on. This could have been one hair raising night for me if I had panicked. It was about then I thought of Winston Churchill's words spoken during the dark hours of World War II regarding the Germans, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." I somehow managed to keep my cool pretty well. I was many miles from home with no transportation, so I wasn't going to let fear get its grip on me. After all, them haunts and ghosts didn't have any clubs, knives or guns. The only time the noises would stop was when I would go upstairs then things would get quiet. The noises would start within 10 minutes after coming downstairs again - the door slams, sliding sounds and stair squeaks. I had gone upstairs four different times to investigate the mystery. It turned 10 o'clock and Prest was not back with my pickup yet. This had been going on for almost three hours. I was now very used to these sounds by now so I just let them ghosts and haunts carry on. Every now and then I would say with a loud voice, "Hey, you clowns, settle down up there!" It would get very quiet for about ten minutes and start again. Them haunts and ghosts were having themselves a blast. It must have been a good night for them to play. I would continue calling them down every few minutes and things would get ghostly quiet for a while. The only good part of any of this is they

couldn't talk back. It was eleven thirty when I saw headlights coming up the road. It was Prest with my pick-up. He started telling me all of what had happened - How he got lost and couldn't find his way - and was going on and on. I told him I didn't want to hear about it and was pretty well put out with him. I said, "The fact is, You left me here without any transportation till 11:30 at night. Don't ask to borrow my pickup ever again. If you are planning on working here tomorrow, you will drive your own pickup." I went back in the old house and got my tools. As I was closing the door, I said, "I will see you fellows tomorrow." Prest asked me, "What was that all about?" I said, "You wouldn't understand." We worked in the old house day after day. I replaced two doors, two door jams and the trim. I replaced some of the hard wood flooring. The old house was very quiet during the day. I never heard a sound of any kind. A few days later, Jim and his wife came by to see how we were doing. He introduced her as Betty. She was around 30 and a full blood Osage Indian. Betty said her father had the house built around 38 years ago. She said she was born and raised in the house and had lived there ever since. I said to Betty, "This old house is haunted, isn't it." She smiled and said, "Yes, it is." I asked her why they were spending their good money on it and she said, "We don't pay much mind to it any more. We have gotten used to it. Once in a while when it gets too bad, Jim will take me and the kids over to my sister's place for the rest of the night." I asked her, "When did the old house first become haunted?" She said, not until after her mother died fifteen years ago upstairs in the south bedroom. Then her father died just four years ago upstairs in the same bedroom and in the same bed. She said the noises had gotten much worse after her father died. She said the doors, door jams, and flooring I had replaced had been shot up by her dad with a shotgun shooting at them ghosts and haunts. She said her dad had shot out windows, shot holes through the walls and in the floor shooting at them ghosts in the past years. I realize that most American Indians are superstitious. As I look back, that night could have been the most terrifying and frightening experience of my life if I had let it. I have given a lot of thought to this as time passed. This is still a great mystery to me and I still don't understand it. These unknown and unseen things we call haunts and ghosts - Do they come from a restless spirit. Could it be the one that died was tormented with a tortured soul or spirit? All this is just too deep and far out for me.

It is hard to put down on paper or explain my feelings and emotions that I experienced that night. I spent four long hours in that old haunted house that dark night. It was a night I will long remember. All of those sounds were real and certainly not my imagination. I never had experienced anything like this before and never have since. The way I have told this story is just the way it happened a long time ago in the old haunted house that night.